



General Certificate of Education

Sociology 5191/6191

Report on the Examination

2006 examination - January series

- 5191 Advanced Subsidiary
- 6191 Advanced

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General Comments

The January examinations brought a wide range of levels of response. There was pleasing evidence of candidates with a broad and detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological material and the ability to use this to respond sensitively and in detail to the set questions and the issues that they raised. Other candidates, while showing a reasonable knowledge of a range of material, were less successful in demonstrating their understanding or in interpreting material in ways that were explicitly relevant to the questions. Candidates too often presented ‘catch all’ answers or offered descriptive rather than analytic and evaluative accounts. Many of these answers suffered from inadequate application of relevant sociological concepts.

There was clear evidence of some but not all candidates planning their answers to the longer questions on the papers. Those who did not plan their answers frequently produced poorly focused, often over-long answers that failed to score highly. Similarly, there was a continuing tendency for candidates to write needlessly lengthy answers to questions worth relatively few marks. Indeed, succinct, well structured answers to such questions tended to bring a higher reward.

Although most scripts were legible, a significant number were barely if at all unreadable. Centres and teachers should be aware that it is in the best interests of candidates who cannot write legibly to consult AQA in advance of the examination for advice on the options available to ensure that they are able to present their work to their maximum benefit.

There were also instances of candidates using correcting fluid, highlighter pens, red and green ink, etc. Centres should note that these are serious infringements of examination regulations and should be prevented.

In terms of the quality of written communication, a number of candidates had serious difficulty in expressing their sociological ideas satisfactorily.

Finally, examiners would greatly appreciate the co-operation of centres in ensuring that candidates complete all relevant details on the front of their answer books.

SCY1

Question 1: Families and Households

This was the most popular question on the paper and was answered by the great majority of candidates.

- (a) Most candidates were able to explain the term ‘serial monogamy’, usually in terms of a succession of marriages and divorces. Some failed to score, for example, by explaining the term as meaning ‘being married to several people at one time’, while a significant number appeared to have a sense of the term’s meaning but were unable to bring any clarity to their explanation.
- (b) Successful answers suggested ways such as cohabiting couples having children, cohabitation now having less stigma attached to it, or the growing instability of marriage. Where candidates had difficulty, it was usually as a result of ignoring the word ‘increasingly’ in the question.

- (c) Most candidates coped fairly well with this question. Reasons suggested included courts giving custody to mothers in divorce cases, men deserting their families, the cultural norm that women should be primary carers, etc. Candidates who asserted biological instincts as a reason failed to score for this. Candidates also failed to score if they did not link their reasons explicitly to women, eg the increase in divorce or the availability of welfare benefits for lone parents (which are of course also available to male lone parents).
- (d) Almost all candidates were able to identify at least one reason, and most successfully identified two reasons. These included loss of stigma, secularisation, women's increased economic independence, and higher expectations of marriage. However, some candidates failed to score because they disregarded the word 'increase' in the question and instead wrote about why couples divorce, (eg incompatibility). Others failed to explain clearly a reason they had correctly identified, eg by failing to link a point about women's changing role to divorce rates.
- (e) Most candidates had some knowledge of feminist contributions to the study of the family. More limited answers tended to be confined to an account of Oakley (sometimes versus Young and Willmott) on the division of domestic labour. Some others strayed somewhat from the question of family roles and relationships to consider the impact of feminism, eg upon social policy in areas such as employment. Stronger answers stayed focused on family life and went beyond the division of labour to examine the feminist contribution to the study of issues such as domestic violence, power, control of finances and decision-making, employing a range of appropriate concepts. Many of these examined similarities and differences between different strands of feminism. At the other extreme, a few weak answers showed little real knowledge of feminism and offered answers that were often over-reliant on fragments of various other perspectives.
- (f) In general, candidates appeared to be more comfortable discussing the role of the extended family in the past and many either concentrated on a functionalist account of how it had been superseded by the nuclear family since industrialisation, or began to debate whether this had happened (usually using Anderson and Laslett). Relatively few candidates were able to discuss the role of the extended family today beyond a fairly commonsensical approach (such as that grandparents can look after grandchildren, etc). The best answers made appropriate use of material on the extended family past and present (including use of the Item, for example to discuss the extended family in Third World countries) and went on to consider issues such as the role of the contemporary extended family in minority ethnic cultures or migrant communities, as well as how far the modified extended family could be likened to the 'classic' pre-industrial extended family described by Parsons.

Question 2: Health

This was the least popular question on the paper.

- (a) Although a minority of candidates clearly had no knowledge or understanding of the term, most succeeded by reference to the importance of illness being officially recognised or certified by a doctor.
- (b) Most candidates were successful here, the most common responses being language barriers, differences in income levels resulting in differential access to private care and the need in some cultures for women patients to see only female doctors.
- (c) Most candidates were able to suggest at least one appropriate reason, such as that women have more contact with GPs because of their childcare responsibilities, the greater acceptability of women talking about their feelings or problems, and higher morbidity rates among women.
- (d) A significant number of candidates did not seem to recognise the concept of the sick role and most candidates tended to focus on the role of the medical profession, with criticisms such as that doctors are not altruistic or that they work in the interests of groups other than patients, (eg capitalists).

- (e) Others identified the bureaucratisation of the medical profession or the fact that it has lost autonomy to hospital administrators or politicians.
- (f) A minority of candidates interpreted the question as asking about the social causes of illness and thus wrote about various material or cultural factors, showing little understanding of the notion of social construction. More successful answers recognised the concept of social construction and many of these successfully described studies such as Szasz, Goffman or Rosenhan. Some candidates also described bio-medical and social models of health, though without always seeing these as illustrations of the idea that 'health' is a social construct. A small number discussed the power of the medical profession to impose definitions of health and illness, and a few examined definitions of disability. However, in general, as with previous questions on this topic, candidates frequently seemed badly prepared and many were struggling even to recognise what the question was about.
- (g) The weakest answers tended to be simple descriptions of health-damaging behaviour such as smoking, lack of exercise, etc with no analysis of why people might behave in these ways. Better answers were able to identify some reasons and to locate these within a debate about the relative importance of structural and cultural factors. A significant minority of candidates confined their answers to differences between social classes, but better responses went on to consider gender, ethnic or age differences as well. Some candidates chose to interpret this as a question about the causes of health inequalities between different social groups. These answers generally presented an account of some explanations of class differences in health chances derived from the Black Report or similar. They remained somewhat at a tangent to the specific demands of the question as to why different social groups practise health-damaging behaviours of various kinds.

Question 3: Mass Media

This was the second most popular question on the paper.

- (a) Most candidates defined this successfully by referring to the notion of the media deciding which issues were to be discussed or presented for public consideration.
- (b) Almost all candidates were able to suggest two models, such as uses and gratifications and selective filter. However, some wrote lengthy answers without naming any specific model.
- (c) Candidates were usually able to identify some relevant concepts, such as folk devil, moral panic, stereotyping, etc although some were unclear as to what the amplification of deviance referred to. A significant number wrote very long descriptive accounts of the amplification process, seemingly hitting on relevant concepts by chance.
- (d) Many candidates answered this well, identifying and explaining appropriate reasons such as ethical problems, the difficulty of studying long-term effects, the artificiality of laboratory settings, problems of controlling all variables, etc.
- (e) Of the three areas from which candidates were asked to choose two, 'ethnicity' was dealt with best. A disappointingly common error was to interpret 'sexuality' as being about gender. Many were also unable to provide much detail from relevant studies of the two areas they had chosen to write about. Hence, responses based on assertions, common sense or anecdotal evidence from soap operas were frequent. By contrast, good answers succeeded in showing knowledge of a range of studies and relevant sociological concepts, such as under-representation, symbolic annihilation, etc. Some good answers discussed different types of media and genre, or change in representations over time. However, many answers were unbalanced, writing a good deal more on one area (generally ethnicity) than on the other.

- (f) Most answers were able to give an account of a Marxist view of the media, although some did not distinguish between hegemonic and traditional Marxist views. Most of these produced a basic Marxist versus pluralist account of the media. Better answers located the approach within a wider context, making use of traditional Marxism and pluralism to evaluate the view in the question, although often this was more by simple juxtaposition of views than by an explicit debate between them. Better answers brought out the differences between different Marxist views of the media concerning specific issues such as the relative power of owners as against that of media professionals. Often this was contrasted with pluralist views about the power of audiences to resist the messages of the media. Better answers also employed relevant key concepts such as agenda setting, gatekeeping and hierarchies of access or credibility, usually in the context of an account of Glasgow Media Group research or similar. However, too few candidates drew on a range of appropriate concepts and their analysis of different views suffered as a result.

SCY2

Question 1: Education

This was by far the most popular question on the paper, with the overwhelming majority of candidates answering it.

- (a) Most candidates answered this correctly, although some failed to make explicit the meaning of ‘cultural’ and so did not gain the marks. Some defined material or economic rather than cultural capital.
- (b) Some candidates suggested two criticisms made *by* Marxists rather than criticisms made *of* Marxists. Some others wrote a great deal without making the criticisms explicit. However, most candidates were able to produce one or two relevant criticisms, such as the neglect of gender or of ethnicity, determinism, etc.
- (c) Most candidates successfully identified some relevant features of the restricted code, eg that it is used by the working class, or not used by schools, that it has a more limited vocabulary or is context bound, etc. A few candidates described the elaborated code instead, and some others wrote in general about working-class culture, labelling, etc with little reference to language or speech codes. Some failed to score because they wrote about the effects of the code rather than about its features.
- (d) Most candidates succeeded in identifying one or two ways in which schooling may mirror the world of work in capitalist society. Most common among these were hierarchy of authority and extrinsic rewards. Where candidates failed to score four marks for both identifying and describing a specific way, this was usually due to describing a process of preparation for work without describing its features in both school and work – for example, the idea that school’s hierarchy of teachers, etc prepares pupils for having to accept hierarchy at work (without stating that this is a hierarchy of bosses and workers, etc).
- (e) Most candidates were able to demonstrate some knowledge and understanding of gender differences in achievement and possible reasons for these. Unfortunately, many answers lacked consistent focus on the issue of ‘now’ raised by the question and tended to present a list of possible reasons that included apparently ‘timeless’ differences between the genders, often with a biological or psychological slant (such as that girls are innately better at language or at concentrating, etc). Better answers succeeded in focusing clearly on what had changed in terms of gender and achievement, and thus dealt appropriately with issues such as the impact of equal opportunities policies in schools, changes in the labour market, curriculum change, the increased feminisation of the teaching profession, girls’ changing priorities, etc. Some answers drifted into an account of subject choice differences between boys and girls without linking this to achievement. Many better answers dealt explicitly with boys’ as well as girls’ achievement, while recognising that achievements had improved for both.

- (f) Many of the weakest answers did little more than recycle material from the Item with some limited embellishments of their own. Some other answers were often little more than an essentially class-based account of under-achievement superimposed onto ethnicity. These answers in particular usually failed to distinguish at all between different minorities. On the positive side, many more candidates showed an awareness of differences between and within ethnic groups. However, some of these failed to offer explanations for such differences. Most candidates confined themselves to a very limited range of studies, but good answers were able to support a range of explanations with relevant empirical material from sociological sources. Many of the better answers were organised effectively in terms of the distinction between factors internal and external to school and dealt with issues such as family structure, poverty, cultural deprivation, racism in wider society, institutional racism in school, labelling and the ethnocentric curriculum.

Question 2: Wealth, Poverty and Welfare

This was the second most popular question on the paper.

- (a) Marks were more often gained for two different examples than for an accurate definition. However, a minority defined income correctly as a flow of resources to an individual or household, etc.
- (b) Most candidates had no difficulty with these concepts and provided a clear explanation of the difference between absolute and relative poverty.
- (c) Some candidates failed to score because they wrote about money income. More successful answers suggested savings, housing, benefits in kind, etc.
- (d) Candidates were generally able to identify one or two appropriate problems, such as massaging of figures by the government, failure to count all those who are in poverty, or problems of making international comparisons, although sometimes they were less successful in explaining these problems clearly.
- (e) Some weaker candidates produced confused or commonsensical answers that showed little or no understanding of the term ‘means-tested benefits’, nor any familiarity with relevant debates. Others were aware of the meaning of the term and were able to present one or two reasons for and against such benefits. A few of the better answers introduced concepts and issues such as dependency culture, the poverty trap, administration costs, stigma, etc. Some candidates disregarded the reference to means testing and wrote about benefits or welfare in general, offering for example accounts of perspectives on the welfare state. These tended to be stronger on theory, but were not sufficiently well applied to the specific issues raised by the question.
- (f) Some candidates confined themselves very largely to looking at gender and poverty, with little or no reference to other groups. However, most candidates used material from the Item to reasonable effect to identify a range of different social groups, but the explanations given for the distribution of poverty were sometimes repetitious. Some candidates introduced different perspectives, such as feminist, Weberian and Marxist, though these were the exception. Some good answers analysed the explanations using a range of appropriate concepts, such as dual labour markets, reserve army of labour, the culture of dependency, patriarchy, capitalism, institutional racism, etc and drew on relevant empirical studies of different groups.

Question 3: Work and Leisure

This was the least popular question on the paper, with very few candidates at all answering it.

- (a) Most candidates gained the marks for this question, usually for answer in terms of one or more of the dimensions identified by Blauner.
- (b) This was generally well answered, with home working and taking work home the ways most frequently identified.
- (c) This too was generally well answered. Typical answers included men going to the pub, and women having less leisure time and less money for leisure.
- (d) Some candidates had little understanding of postmodernist views on work or leisure and tended to fare poorly here. However, the majority were able to put forward one or two relevant criticisms, such as constraints on the ability to choose and the continued importance of work.
- (e) Many answers tended to take a list-like approach, considering one group after another and offering (somewhat repetitiously) explanations of each in turn (for example, using discrimination by employers as an explanation for each group successively). There was a reasonably good awareness of the groups subject to higher risk of unemployment, but weaker answers tended to turn the question on its head and focus instead on explanations for the particular group's work pattern.
- (f) Generally this was rather poorly answered. Predictably, perhaps, the weakest responses tended to recycle material from the Item while adding little of their own. Some other weak answers offered commonsense scenarios as to what might cause unhappiness at work. Rather better answers began to focus on the question of technology in terms of whether it had a positive or negative effect on workers' experience of work. Some went on to identify other factors that can influence workers' satisfaction, such as pay, surveillance, workers' orientations, intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards, etc but these ideas were rarely developed, while information drawn from sociological studies was the exception rather than the rule.

SC3W – Sociological Methods**General**

There was still a tendency, in common with previous examinations, for some candidates to treat the 'examine' command in question 1(e) as an 'assess' task, which sometimes resulted in a lack of sustained focus on examining the disadvantages of unstructured interviews by presenting a substantial review of their advantages.

Time management seems to be improving, with fewer examples of candidates apparently running out of time on the final essay. Similarly, there were fewer examples of over-writing on the first four part-questions, which appeared to give most candidates sufficient time to present good length essay responses.

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates could offer an appropriate explanation of 'a snowball sample'. In some cases, reference to the Item proved helpful to candidates by providing an example or further amplification of their initial statement. A number of candidates had little or no idea about the term or explained the analogy of a 'snowball' in the most general of terms.

- (b) Very few candidates failed to gain at least two marks and many gained maximum marks on this part-question. Issues most commonly raised included people not being at home, feelings of an invasion of privacy, time consuming (often related directly to the example in the item) and distrust of real motives of the researcher. In some cases candidates presented these issues in a way that lacked clarity and consequently lost them marks. For example, some candidates simply stated ‘they may lie’ without any qualifying statement linking to the doorstep mode of delivery.
- (c) Most candidates successfully identified two or three appropriate reasons. Most commonly, candidates mentioned access, time saving, representativeness, comparisons, historical dimension reliability, etc. A few candidates had not identified ‘low cost’ in the Item and by putting this point in their answer did not gain marks.
- (d) Most candidates could at least identify two disadvantages with informal/in-depth interviews. Some very good answers successfully identified and also explained issues such as time, lack of standardised questions, interviewer bias, irrelevant material, etc. Some candidates however, found it difficult to explain the disadvantages they had identified. This illustrates the need for candidates to practice the ‘identify – explain’ format, thinking ahead to the ‘explain’ task before they make their initial identification. Candidates should also be encouraged to make use of key concepts such as reliability, representativeness and validity in their explanations.
- (e) The most commonly referred to problems were those relating to low response rate/representativeness and interpretation of questions without a researcher being present. Stronger responses offered a wider range of problems, went into greater explanatory depth or made more effective use of key concepts such as reliability or validity. As in previous examinations, a sizeable proportion of candidates confused or conflated these terms. Better responses also correctly identified the methodological location of postal questionnaires. Few candidates made reference to studies using postal questionnaires, with the Hite report being the most commonly utilised example where any study was mentioned. Some answers were diverted into often lengthy accounts of the advantages of postal questionnaires rather than using these advantages as a way to evaluate specific problems. Other less effective responses had a more limited focus on the postal dimension, focussing mainly on the questionnaire aspect of the question.
- (f) Most candidates were able to present at least a sound response to this question, usually basing their answer on one or more forms of participant observation. Stronger answers often offered a wider range of forms of observation including non-participant and observation in laboratory or field experiments. There were a few examples of very weak responses that were very limited in length or which repeated a few basic points about participant observation.

The strongest responses exhibited a detailed understanding of observation presented in a theoretical framework and utilising appropriate concepts in an accurate manner. Only the very strongest candidates went beyond the ‘observation is favoured by interpretivists’ position, by pointing out that Positivists can make use of structured observation.

Many candidates referred to examples of studies employing participant observation with Humphreys, Barker and Patrick predominating. However, the effectiveness of these references ranged from the simply stated and descriptive to those that were closely applied to the points being made. Similarly, although most candidates made some reference to the Item, many then simply picked out and stated a point or two rather than making more effective and developed use of relevant material.

Less effective answers also tended to present a list of apparent advantages and disadvantages with limited discussion, analysis or evaluation. Evaluation tended to be stronger than analysis and even knowledgeable candidates were sometimes unable to explain fully the characteristics, advantages and disadvantages that they identified.

SC3C – Coursework

General

There were few very good proposals. As in previous series, the quality of work does vary considerably. Some of the proposals submitted were well beyond the capability of a 16/17 year-old and would pose significant ethical and implementation problems if taken through to SC5C.

There are still a number of issues concerning the requirement to adhere to the 1200 word limit for SC3C, although the majority of centres do appear to recognise this in their marking. Centres need to appreciate the importance of the key words in the mark scheme. For example, in order to meet the criteria for the top mark band candidates must be precise, concise and succinct.

Despite the comment above, the greater majority of proposals were generally close to the recommended overall length of 1200 words, although there were examples of candidates whose stated word count was lower than the actual figure.

The majority of coursework continues to be well presented in word-processed format and with a sensible font. Centres should encourage candidates to use the correct section headings as in the specification and to avoid the use of stapling or poly pockets for securing work. Treasury tags will suffice.

Ethical Issues

The majority of candidates continue to demonstrate sensitivity to ethical concerns. However, centres must take care to ensure where several candidates use similar contextual or conceptual material, or use the same main research method, they do not collaborate when writing it. Furthermore, candidates should be encouraged to interpret and apply textbook material to their stated aim or hypothesis **using their own words**.

Administration

The following key administrative points should be noted, on the basis of common errors reported by moderators in January.

- A Candidate Record Form (CRF) should be attached to each candidate's work with the correct candidate name, number and signature of authentication by student and staff. The CRF must be for the 2006 series of exams.
- The mark given on the Candidate Record Form (CRF) should match the mark given on the Centre Mark Sheet (CMS). This was not always the case.
- Teachers should put detailed comments on **the reverse of the CRF** indicating how the marks were rewarded, as annotation in the proposal itself can make it very difficult to read, especially where the original work is crossed out and replaced by the teacher comments.
- With every sample please submit a Centre Declaration Sheet (CDS), which has the signature of each teacher involved in the centre moderation and head of centre. A large proportion of the samples failed to have a CDS enclosed and moderators had to contact the centres for them.
- Second and third copies (pink and yellow sheets) of the Centre Mark sheet (CMS) should always be sent with the sample, irrespective of the sample size. The Moderator will return the third (yellow) copy when returning the sample to the centre. It will indicate which candidates' work has been sampled by the moderator.

Assessment Criteria

Hypothesis or Aim

As in previous series, there were few proposals which focused on aspects of the specification beyond the family and education, possibly as a result of these candidates not yet studying other areas of sociology.

Compared to previous series, more candidates exceeded the word limits in this section, with the aim or hypothesis and direction of the proposal sometimes obscured by sheer weight of words. Many candidates still have difficulty distinguishing an aim from a hypothesis and subsequently give both. Many also offer two aims but do not recognise this, although the problem could often be resolved by simple re-phrasing.

Centre marking of this section is still variable, and many candidates are still being given top band marks solely on the basis of what is in this section. As stated in previous reports, candidates should revisit their aim or hypothesis through each of the sections and show progression is clearly possible by remaining focused to it.

Context and Concepts

This section was generally done well, although a large majority of candidates were well beyond the 400 word count. Some centres appear to be following a common template approach which clearly identifies which two concepts and which two sources are being used. As stated in previous reports, stronger candidates using this approach are also able to relate concepts to the contextual sources by not only writing a paragraph defining them but showing why they are relevant. However, weaker candidates can end up with a 'bolted-on' concept paragraph at the end of the section.

One unintended consequence of the writing frame approach is that a lot of candidates now spend more time writing about concepts, sometimes to the detriment of levels of detail in the contexts. It was common to find more than two contextual sources offered with little depth or focus. Many focused on conjugal roles and differential educational achievement and relied on mundane rendition of some very dated material, often lifted directly from a textbook, particularly in the education area.

The majority of candidates seem to have grasped the need to progress concepts, but where concepts such as 'television' or 'violence' were offered, there was often a graphic descriptor of its physical component but little that related it to sociology. Hence, the candidates found it difficult to operationalise them.

Theoretical insight was usually lacking beyond assertive reference to 'Feminists' or 'Marxists', even though it had a clear significance to the reason offered for study in the first section.

Main Research Method and Reasons

This section was usually competent insofar as candidates chose a method, justified its selection (often via a passing reference to the need for qualitative or quantitative research), and were able to discuss its advantages. Unfortunately, there is still a tendency for candidates to reproduce notes or textbook notes on their chosen method, rather than focusing upon the most appropriate way to progress the proposal. Candidates should recognise that they need to show that their chosen method will actually work and that they could carry it out.

We continue to see copies of questionnaires submitted (which are not required), rather than a selective discussion on key questions to be used that relate to how the context sources or concepts can be progressed. Candidates also confuse sampling techniques and sample sizes. In particular candidates appear to struggle with the idea of what sample can be obtained from an electoral register or previous census, and the implications of the Data Protection Act to their research.

It was pleasing to see some candidates are more systematic and rigorous in their detail on how the research is to be implemented. They are able to consider the significant practical, ethical and theoretical issues that influence their own research.

Potential Problems

This section was not always well done. Many candidates seemed to treat this section quite cursorily, and gained few marks as a result. There were also many candidates who were well under the word length. Many candidates relied on a discussion of practicalities, with only a passing reference to theory and ethics, usually via a mention of confidentiality or informed consent.

There is still a tendency for weaker candidates to identify problems as a list of ‘disadvantages’, with limited focus on the aim or hypothesis. Candidates are more likely to be successful when they link the problems back to the methods section, but not through a ‘solutions’ based approach (which is not rewarded).

Better candidates were able to present problems with specific links to their own research, and were therefore able to develop a critical framework that raises issues of a practical, ethical and theoretical nature. It was particularly impressive to see problems that related back to material discussed in the context and concepts section.

SCY4

Section A: Power and Politics

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates responded well to this question. The most commonly offered reasons were a lack of understanding on the part of the electorate, political parties becoming too remote, the young seeing politics as boring and nothing to do with them and people feeling that their vote would not make a difference. Explanations were mostly clear and concise. A few candidates ignored the instruction in the question and discussed a decline in political interest by the electorate. They could not score marks for this example.
- (b) This question brought forth a wide variety of responses. Most focused in various ways on pressure groups and New Social Movements. Here there were great variations in the level of detail and precision with in some cases sweeping assumptions being made about the power and success of such groups. For the most part candidates gave accounts of different types of pressure group and/or defined NSMs and used empirical examples to develop their answers. A small minority chose to consider riots as their only form of direct action.

More perceptive candidates linked answers to theories of power and gave balanced accounts considering where real power lies in our political system and the effectiveness of direct action in bringing about the desired change. Such accounts were usually the most evaluative and scored well.

Question 2

This was the more popular by some way of the two questions. Most answers presented an outline of pluralist views on power generally, focusing on Dahl, and many went on to include several other perspectives. Better candidates addressed each aspect of the question – ie distribution and use – while others wrote more generally about power.

Many did not attempt to consider the relevance of pluralism today, and contemporary material generally was lacking. It is disappointing after so many examinations in this Unit where similar questions have been reported on with reference to ‘society today’ or similar phrases that candidates appear able for the most part only to relate their range of perspectives in a timeless and stateless vacuum. It is all the more disappointing considering the depth and breadth of knowledge of the perspectives shown by many candidates that their understanding should be so lacking in this respect.

Question 3

This was the less popular of the two politics 40-mark questions, with only a minority of candidates offering a view. Among those who did there was an often impressive grasp of recent (and very recent) political developments. The most common approach included some discussion on the Conservative party under Mrs Thatcher, the change from Labour to New Labour under Tony Blair and the recent changes within the Conservative Party under David Cameron. These details were usually set in the context of parties trying to occupy the centre ground of politics.

The better answers were able to relate empirical examples to the political ideologies of conservatism, democratic socialism and so on, but many treated the question as about policies rather than ideologies. It was noticeable that answers focused almost exclusively on the three major parties. None used nationalist parties or those from Northern Ireland to offer different insights on the question.

Section B: Religion

General

A worrying factor in the performance of candidates this January was the compartmentalisation of knowledge displayed. This was evident in the way that many candidates who had difficulties with question 4(a) subsequently used examples of membership turnover as evidence in question 4(b) to show churches not meeting needs and showing that they did in fact understand the concept of turnover.

Similarly many candidates seemed to recall information in blocks on an all-or-nothing basis which means that much irrelevant or tangential material is delivered as part of their answer. For example, question 4(b) elicited many accounts of typologies of sects. These were recounted in lengthy descriptive sequences that must have used up valuable time that could have been better spent focusing on the religious and spiritual needs of people as the question demanded.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates seemed not to understand the concept of turnover of membership. In such cases their answers usually focused exclusively on why people join NRMs. These were often explained at some length. However, such answers were only a partial response to the question. To score full marks candidates needed to address why people come **and** go from NRMs, thus resulting in significant changes of membership.

Candidates who understood the concept seemed to have few problems in presenting appropriate responses. An effective strategy by many was to use the notion of the ‘revolving door’ - these always scored well. Reasons were usually focused on the idea of shopping around different religions, joining an NRM to face a life crisis and leaving when the crisis was over, joining in good faith but finding NRMs too strict or restrictive and so leaving, and joining because attracted by a charismatic leader and leaving if or when the leader leaves or dies.

- (b) Many answers focused on religion in general and in so doing limited the marks they could achieve. In a significant number of cases up to two thirds of the answer offered was not addressing the central issue posed by the question. It was disappointing to see so many responses, seemingly triggered by the word religion, that veered off-course from the first sentence. Many clearly wanted to discuss

secularisation or typologies of sects and did so even though the question had not asked for either of these. The loss of marks on this question was significant and technique here is something that could be addressed by centres.

Some candidates were able to discuss churches and denominations (though only a few treated these separately) but even here there was a tendency to look at non-religious needs or at the role of churches in relation to the state and so on. Some of the better answers focused more clearly on needs and were specific about which groups might be affected; for example, discussing feelings that churches were out of touch, too remote, bureaucratic, resistant to change, etc and discussing why females or the young people might feel churches did not meet their religious needs. Better answers often provided contrast with others for whom such organisations are central to their lives and clearly do have their needs met.

Question 5

This question revealed a major weakness, namely the inability of candidates to link the theory they generally knew well with a range of specific and relevant examples. ‘Today’ was ignored by over 80% of candidates. Good candidates maintained a focus on functionalism, often going into great detail on the research by Durkheim, Malinowski, Parsons and Bellah, and used feminisms/Post-Modernism and Neo-Marxism well. There was evidence of a better conceptual grasp than has been observed in previous years. However Weber remains a mystery to many candidates who wish to polarise the theorists. He appeared variously as a ‘neo-functionalist’, a ‘lapsed functionalist’, a ‘good friend to Marx’ and someone who ‘could not make up his mind about his theoretical position’.

Many candidates were inextricably drawn to an answer about religion as a conservative force or religion and social change. They had clearly been so well prepared for these that they were incapable of re-locating their material to a new question. Similarly, many candidates wrote exclusively on the role of religion in society, often in great detail, but paid no attention whatsoever to ‘functionalist views of’ thus demonstrating deficiencies in their A02 skills and failing to gain some of the marks available.

Question 6

This question produced a variety of responses. Here again it was common for the question to be taken in a very generic form on religion, rather than generating a focus on the specifics of belief and practice. Some concentrated on the perspectives, looking at gender and religion from, for example, functionalist and Marxist views; others presented a feminist account of religion in general; and others gave a series of empirical examples, often drawn from an impressive variety of religions, women in Judaism and Islam being popular choices. The majority of answers were reasonably successful with some good answers locating the evidence within a wide conceptualisation of patriarchy, but few reached the depth and breadth that could generate top band marks. Some, unusually but pleasingly, also recognised the male aspect of the question.

Section C: World Sociology

Question 7

World Sociology continues to be the chosen option of a small minority of centres only. Given that text book and other standard resources are limited for this topic, it is a credit to centres that so many candidates seem very well prepared for the exam, able to draw on a variety of sources and examples and clearly engaging with the topic.

- (a) A small number of candidates used a reason from the Item, or one that was so close that it could not be rewarded. The majority were able to give two or more reasons; these were usually exploitation by TNCs, lack of education and lack of ways of obtaining capital or having economic independence.

These were usually well explained. One or two candidates produced over-long descriptive examples illustrating, perhaps, that their use of time in the examination was not the most profitable possible.

- (b) Some candidates produced rather general answers that could have been about health in developed countries, not referring specifically to the likely form of the problem in a developing country. Many candidates started with the idea taken from the Item of access to clean water, but were able to go on to list other factors such as access to healthcare facilities, the prevalence of particular diseases, diet and food supply, degradation of the environment and so on. The role and influence of developed countries and TNCs appeared in some better answers.

Question 8

Some weaker candidates saw this as the opportunity to present a juxtaposition of modernisation and dependency theories. In such cases the question remained largely implicit. Other, stronger candidates took the trouble to unpack the question and offer something in response to each of the dimensions – ie cultural, political and economic. The last of these often dominated such answers and Rostow and Frank again featured heavily.

Better answers presented not simply the traditional theoretical juxtapositions, but were also able to include discussion on the globalist, internationalist debate, or used the categorisations devised by David Held (1999) of sceptics, hyperglobalisers and transformationalists to structure their arguments. There were some excellent and thought provoking responses from some candidates.

Question 9

This was the less popular choice between the two 40-mark questions and here again some weaker candidate saw this as an opportunity to provide a simple juxtaposition of the views of Rostow and Frank. Better candidates, however, realised an opportunity to explore a range of issues linked to development strategies. In some better answers the nature of world markets and trade, political influences and the problems of aid, for example, were explored. Many empirical examples were cited; the most often mentioned being the ‘Asian Tigers’. In some answers the focus fell almost exclusively on the role of TNCs, ignoring governments and other agencies.

Balanced answers, giving equal attention to aid and trade, were rare. However there is clearly good work being done by many candidates and despite the small selection there were some very well considered responses.

SC5W – Theory and Methods

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Given the frequency with which this term is used in answers to questions on this Unit it was surprising to find so many variations of explanation as to its meaning. An acceptable answer needed to explain in essence that if research were replicated at a later date or by another researcher, or done on another sample then the same results would be found. Some candidates had the notion of repeatability only and so scored only one of the available marks. Others claimed that reliability meant that the research was reliable and some that it was valid. Confusion on these terms continues.
- (b) (i) Most candidates had few problems with this question. The most often cited examples were diaries, historical documents, newspapers or other media material and personal documents such as letters. Some candidates erroneously offered qualitative methods rather than data and some others chose quantitative data such as official statistics. These latter examples could not score marks.

- (ii) Those who had correctly answered question 1(b)(i) usually found little difficulty in providing this developmental information. Often the usefulness was explained in terms of meanings, motives, thoughts, depth and detail, with many candidates linking such ideas to theoretical perspectives such as interactionism. Weaker answers merely focused on one of these elements, such as adding depth, and giving little in the way of developing explanation.
- (c) Given the problems that some candidates had with the explanation in question 1(a) it was perhaps as well that they did not have to re-examine the concepts here but could take them as given. Even so, some had problems. Most focused on incomplete statistics, such as those resulting from non-reported crimes; changes in classifications; government interference; errors resulting from non-compliance by the respondents, such as during the Census and variations in recording procedures. These were usually explained adequately.

Some others failed to score full marks because they chose two too similar issues or they failed to make the points clearly and distinctly. Some failed to score marks because their explanations were actually developments, elaborations or examples of their issue and did not actually explain the issue in any way.

- (d) Many saw this as their chance to provide long answers on sociology as a science. This was a poor strategy as it probably took a great deal of time and expended much effort on material, much of which would be at a tangent to the main thrust of the question.

Other answers could be divided into three types. The first gave a list of ways in which values might enter research or affect the researcher, for instance in the choice of topic or method. The second started a theoretical debate between positivism and anti-positivism, often referring to writers such as Comte, Durkheim, Giddens, Gouldner, Popper and Kuhn, or considering the committed positions in research of Marxists and feminists. Better answers managed to combine these two elements to some degree, though complete balance was not expected in such a brief response.

Section B

Question 2

This was a very popular question and very few answered it poorly. However, what distinguished the very good responses from the moderate was the ability to provide a discussion on practical issues in research backed by a sound theoretical structure.

Many simply focused on practical issues and distinguished between different types of observation, over which there were many confusions, and looked at some of the advantages and disadvantages of each. Marks were scored more or less depending on the number and range of advantages and/or disadvantages discussed the fullness of the discussion and the provision of empirical examples to illustrate the points made. Many candidates provide over-long descriptions of particular studies, particularly Patrick, Humphries, Barker and Whyte. Where theory entered some answers it often did so only in a brief juxtapositional way, explaining that ‘positivists did not like’ or ‘interactionists did like’ one method or another.

Stronger candidates provided answers that contained a richer mixture of theoretical and empirical material and saw matters in a less polarised fashion. In these answers a more pragmatic view was taken on research stances and choices and a range of issues and examples were discussed.

Question 3

Poor answers to this question were rare, but that may be because weaker candidates were more drawn to question 8. This broad topic of social change appears to have been well understood by many candidates and a common feature was a structure which owed much to the final chapter in Haralambos and

Holborn's Sociology. Quite sophisticated answers were forthcoming, citing views from a range of authors, usually including Lyotard, Baudrillard, Philo, Harvey and Giddens.

A familiar weakness in many responses was a lack of balance, with too much of the answer devoted to postmodernism and too little to modernism. However, in such answers the postmodernist material was usually carefully selected, well understood and clearly recounted and so there were still possibilities to score well.

Some weaker candidates took a view, wrongly, that this question justified a response that gave a description of all the perspectives, one by one, on the basis that they were all developed in modern or post modern society. While some of this material might have been relevant it could score good marks only if the relevance had been clearly shown and developed.

SC5C – Coursework

General

Many candidates rely heavily on the work from their previous SC3C proposals, even to the extent of identifying 'my first context' and 'first concept', generally indicative of a lack of insight into the specification requirements, a minimal amount of further contextual or methodological reading and limited theoretical insight. If candidates choose to use their AS work as a basis for this unit, they should bear in mind the requirements at A2. Candidates should produce an integrated piece of work, demonstrating a much broader and deeper understanding than at AS and therefore they will not score well if they simply 'lift' sections from their AS coursework.

The majority of candidates continue to apply the one research method and limit the number of aims to be carried through. However, there are still some candidates whose work is not sufficiently focused on the rationale and is up to four times the recommended length of 3500 words. The necessary guidance and support must be given to candidates when constructing their rationale to ensure that the aims set are achievable within the word limit and they have an appropriate timescale for completion.

It is pleasing to note that there were few ethical problems to report in this series.

Centre administration

Please see comments under SC3W.

Assessment Criteria

Context

Once again, this was felt to be the strongest section of the coursework. Unfortunately, the quality of work remains variable, the key variable tending to be the degree to which candidates are able to establish links with their own research. An increasing proportion of candidates have taken the entreaty to write succinctly to heart (some to excess, with brevity leading to superficiality), but there are a disturbingly high number whose references seem to consist of plagiarism from textbooks and undifferentiated 'lifts' from the internet.

Many candidates either disregard the theoretical context of their work completely, or simply mention it in passing. An increasing number have unfortunately chosen simply to replicate the 'my first context is ...' AS model, with additional depth coming from a third contextual piece and a third or fourth concept. However, these are rarely progressed through the remaining coursework sections.

Some candidates make an effort to use contemporary material, but this is often journalistic in tone and style, lacking an identifiable and explicitly sociological context. This could be seen with studies on 'media effects' that offered a pre-prepared account of different theories on media effects, but with little reference to actual research carried out in this area.

Methodology

Methodology sections were generally well done, although a generic version still predominates in some centres. Semi-structured interviews appear to have taken over from the questionnaire as the most popular method, but few candidates are able to place it in the correct theoretical camps. Most candidates now mention the use of a pilot, and some provide evidence of this and evaluate it fully, altering their data gathering instruments as a result. Unfortunately, sampling techniques remains a highly problematic area, with candidates presenting a rehearsed list of the different sampling techniques without understanding why and how their chosen sampling method suits their research. Access is rarely discussed, despite some ethically sensitive studies, for example involving young people and crime. Other ethically sensitive areas which involve parental consent and use of primary school children for research are not considered to be problematic by many candidates.

Most students have locked onto the PET (Practical, Ethical, and Theoretical) acronym, which leads to a rather formulaic approach at times. Several candidates still feel the need to discount every other method, which is not required; one discussed as an appropriate alternative will suffice.

An increasing number of candidates do choose to deal with operationalisation issues through a question-by-question approach. Candidates must recognise that questions that do venture into respondents' personal experiences may be problematic. Where this discussion becomes very lengthy candidates may be advised to place this in the appendix and make passing reference to it in the methodology section, so reducing the overall word count. Remember, this discussion should form part of the methodology section not the APIA section.

In general, it would be helpful if candidates, as researchers, asked themselves the following questions:

- Why this method?
- Will it give me the evidence to answer the hypothesis and aims?
- Am I capable of carrying out this research?
- What about the validity and reliability with the data?
- Have I operationalised the concepts and contextual evidence in my research?

At the top end, candidates are able to demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of their chosen method and offer a full and coherent discussion of reasons for the choice of method. They have taken on previous advice about applying theoretical, ethical and practical issues to their own research. Research documents were placed in the appendix (not adding to the word count) and referred to in the main text.

Evidence (Application, Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis (APIA))

Quality was more variable in this section, with APIA by and large the weakest section in most studies. This section often appears rushed and candidates fail to recognise the significant amount of marks available.

High-scoring candidates were very focused, with many opting for an aim-by-aim approach. These candidates adopt an analytical style by adopting a questioning approach to their findings and discussing

the possible meanings behind them. They may draw on previous contextual evidence to show similarities or contradictions between their sources of evidence. This quality frequently generates the sensitivity of interpretation and analysis and the level of sociological insight required for these higher mark bands. In summary, these candidates are more systematic, selective and use the evidence to enhance their understanding beyond description. Analysis also includes explicit reference to the rationale, theory, context and concepts.

A minority of candidates fell foul of the two-method issue, principally because of the introduction of extra contextual data not previously referred to in the context section, but in some cases because they actually went out and used two separate methods. This problem must be picked up by the supervising teacher in early discussions with candidates.

Rationale, Evaluation and Conclusions

Issues raised in previous reports still remain. The rationale on the whole is clear, but many are as short and limited. The recommendation of between 250-350 words for the rationale will allow the candidate to outline their reasons for choice, offer a relevant sociological context for the study with clear linkage to a hypothesis and limited number of achievable aims. The strength of many higher scoring candidates work has been the succinct and relevant rationale which is referred to and explicitly progressed through each section of the coursework. These same candidates are able to demonstrate their evaluative skills throughout the coursework, by a critical review of the background debate in the rationale, a careful examination of the contextual sources, an informed justification of proposed methodology and thorough analysis of the evidence produced.

Too many candidates still offer only the weakest of recommendations for further research. Limited examples include: I'd ask more people, visit another school, include ethnic minorities in my sample and use triangulation; whereas the stronger candidates are able to review the entire research process as much more problematic and recognise genuine opportunities to develop the research. The recommendations they offer are both practicable and achievable.

In the last section most candidates were aware of the need to generate conclusions and evaluate their methodology. Some candidates use a section-by-section approach to evaluation, which tends to result in insufficient detail or depth when looking at their methodology. It was pleasing to note some candidates did refer directly to their research diary in their evaluation of the method which gave it a strong reflective and chronological feel drawing upon the strengths and weaknesses of their own research. With reference to the conclusions drawn, many candidates fail to revisit the hypothesis and aims from the rationale and make significant detailed judgements about whether the evidence from the contextual and evidence sections confirm or refute these.

SCY6

General

In general, candidates appear to have completed their answers in the time allowed, although a few mismanaged their time by writing excessively long answers for part (a) in particular, with correspondingly inappropriately brief answers to part (c). There were also a few instances of candidates not attempting all parts of the question they had chosen. Some candidates failed to respond adequately to the synoptic demands of the paper, notably on Question 1(b) (see below for detailed comments on this). On the other hand, there was evidence of detailed knowledge and good skills in a minority of answers, together with evidence of planning and organisation of the material presented. However, some candidates, who may have been taking this paper before completing the rest of the course, appeared to lack knowledge of significant areas where synoptic links were called for. This was mainly apparent in Question 1(a) part (ii), which called for links to be made to areas from Unit 4. On a more positive note, compared to last year there was less of a tendency to make synoptic links indiscriminately to all areas of

the specification without regard to the requirements of the question. Disappointingly, however, many scripts were impaired by the poor quality of candidates' written communication skills.

Question 1: Crime and Deviance

This question was answered by the great majority of candidates taking this paper.

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify and explain two ways in which crime and deviance could be related to the specified areas. The most popular areas chosen were education and religion. Many candidates scored for relating negative labelling by teachers, or failure in schools, or religion as a source of social control, or world-rejecting sects, or variations in suicide rates, to crime and deviance. A few candidates made successful links between issues in world sociology, such as the activities of trans-national corporations or globalisation, to crime and deviance. However, some candidates failed to make a clear link to the area proposed, for example claiming to show a relationship between crime and poverty but then using material that only identified class not poverty as a factor. A few other candidates used an area from Unit 1, such as families and households, rather than ones from the areas specified in the question. Another error was to explain part of the identifier without connecting this to crime and deviance. For example, some candidates found themselves explaining the reasons for educational failure rather than explaining how failure might lead to crime and deviance. There were also many unnecessarily long answers to this question.
- (b) Candidates were generally able to identify a few problems but they often treated qualitative data as a homogeneous category and failed to discuss specific examples of different methods and sources within it. Some candidates lost focus on the set question by writing about the problems of quantitative data, or the advantages of qualitative data, where a significant minority wasted time with lengthy accounts of the strengths of such data before tackling the problems. However, the major shortcoming in most answers, including those that did recognise the problems of different qualitative methods or sources, was their inability to make sustained synoptic links between the methodological issues identified and how or why these might pose problems when studying crime and deviance. Many potentially good answers thus remained locked into what were essentially 'methods' response about the general problems of gathering and using qualitative data.

By contrast, the best answers were able to refer to studies such as Patrick, Humpheys, Ditton, etc and relate problems to particular examples or cases of studying deviance. These answers examined issues such as ethics, the difficulty of accessing and exiting groups, problems of recording data, the danger of going native and problems of interpretation. The most successful answers dealt with a range of qualitative methods and sources, including life histories, diaries, interviews and participant observation, both covert and overt.

- (c) Many candidates misinterpreted conflict theories as 'conflicting theories' and then went on to give an account of a wide range of theories before reaching the conclusion that it was valuable to have conflicting theories because this gave a more complete picture. Some others misinterpreted conflict theories to mean structural theories, leading them to contrast both Marxism and functionalism with interactionism. Of those candidates who did understand the meaning of the term, some confined themselves to an account of traditional Marxist views about law enforcement and law creation and usually went on to contrast this with functionalist views such as Durkheim's. By contrast, better answers were also able to discuss variants of Marxism such as new criminology and, more rarely, Marxist subcultural theories. Some candidates also dealt with new left realism, feminism and occasionally labelling theory. The best answers successfully located these ideas in a general theoretical framework and drew upon empirical studies such as Chambliss, Pearce, Snider, Bonger, Sutherland, Lea and Young, Gilroy, Carlen and Heidensohn. Evaluation was more often achieved by contrasting alternative explanations rather than by an explicit critique of conflict theories as being deterministic, neglecting consensus, etc.

Question 2: Stratification and Differentiation

Very few candidates indeed answered this question. The following comments are thus offered largely as a guide to some of the ingredients of an appropriate response.

- (a) Candidates here might identify and explain issues such as the fact that actor tests only measure discrimination, not other important areas such as prejudice or indirect racism, or the difficulty of being certain that respondents are responding to the actor's ethnicity rather than to some other variable that the researcher has failed to control for.
- (b) A successful answer here requires candidates to make links to two or more areas from Units 2 and 4. Candidates might discuss these in relation to concepts and issues such as patriarchy, stereotyping, gender role socialisation, the reserve army of labour, the glass ceiling, reasons for differential educational achievement, under-representation among political or religious office-holders, the position of women in developing societies, etc. Analysis and evaluation might be developed by locating the discussion within an appropriate theoretical framework (for example, a debate between different varieties of feminism, New Right or functionalist views, etc) or by considering the interplay between gender and other dimensions of stratification in relation to the areas selected, (eg the relationship between gender and ethnicity in educational achievement).
- (c) An appropriate answer here would require the candidate to demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of functionalist and New Right explanations of stratification, such as Davis and Moore and Parsons, as well as of relevant non-functionalist views such as those of Marxists, Tumin, etc. The question also calls for a sound grasp of relevant empirical work, such as Saunders, Marshall, Goldthorpe, Glass, Westergaard, etc. Relevant issues and concepts, discussion of which would enable candidates to develop appropriate evaluation and analysis, include the following: the significance of mobility rates and changes in these over time; ascribed versus achieved status; stratification in traditional societies; gender and mobility; the ideological functions of the concept of meritocracy; social closure strategies; debates about the extent to which education systems are meritocratic, etc.

Mark Range and Award of Grades

Unit/Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Maximum Mark (Scaled)	Mean Mark (Scaled)	Standard Deviation (Scaled)
Unit 1 (SCY1)	60	60	32.0	8.8
Unit 2 (SCY2)	60	60	31.3	9.1
Unit 3 (SC3W)	60	60	37.5	7.7
Unit 3 (SC3C)	60	60	36.2	6.8
Unit 4 (SCY4)	60	60	34.9	8.0
Unit 5 (SC5W)	60	60	34.0	8.5
Unit 5 (SC5C)	60	60	39.6	8.4
Unit 6 (SCY6)	60	60	29.0	8.4

For units which contain only one component, scaled marks are the same as raw marks.

SCY1 (18136 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	41	36	31	27	23
Uniform Boundary Mark	105	84	74	63	53	42

SCY2 (9062 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	39	35	31	27	24
Uniform Boundary Mark	105	84	74	63	53	42

SC3W – Written (6693 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	43	39	35	31	28
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

SC3C – Coursework (1175 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	42	37	33	29	25
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

SCY4 (12183 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	41	37	33	29	26
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

SC5W – Written (3216 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	42	37	32	27	23
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

SC5C – Coursework (1608 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	46	41	37	33	29
Uniform Boundary Mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

SCY6 (584 candidates)

Grade	Max. mark	A	B	C	D	E
Scaled Boundary Mark	60	43	39	35	31	27
Uniform Boundary Mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

Advanced Subsidiary award

Provisional statistics for the award (31196 candidates)

	A	B	C	D	E
Cumulative %	17.1	36.2	56.1	73.0	86.1

Advanced award

Provisional statistics for the award (21705 candidates)

	A	B	C	D	E
Cumulative %	19.8	46.4	72.1	89.2	97.0

Definitions

Boundary Mark: the minimum (scaled) mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Mean Mark: is the sum of all candidates' marks divided by the number of candidates. In order to compare mean marks for different components, the mean mark (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Standard Deviation: a measure of the spread of candidates' marks. In most components, approximately two-thirds of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean, and approximately 95% of all candidates lie in a range of plus or minus two standard deviations from the mean. In order to compare the standard deviations for different components, the standard deviation (scaled) should be expressed as a percentage of the maximum mark (scaled).

Uniform Mark: a score on a standard scale which indicates a candidate's performance. The lowest uniform mark for grade A is always 80% of the maximum uniform mark for the unit, similarly grade B is 70%, grade C is 60%, grade D is 50% and grade E is 40%. A candidate's total scaled mark for each unit is converted to a uniform mark and the uniform marks for the units which count towards the AS or A Level qualification are added in order to determine the candidate's overall grade.